ADRIANO FRAGANO

ANTISPECIESIST MANIFESTO

THEORY, STRATEGY, ETHICS AND UTOPIA FOR A NEW FREE SOCIETY

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Language used

The words we use every day in written and spoken language, as well as manners of expression and idiomatic phrases, allow us to describe our perception of the world. At the same time, they can influence it by broadening or narrowing our perspective, and in any case, significantly condition how we see things.

Words are important and should always be used with the awareness that they have a specific weight. Words indeed have their own gravity. They can reinforce or dismantle a concept, do good or harm, and they can transform and distort reality. Those who wish to bring about a radical change in today's human society must also begin to do so through the language they will use to convey new ideas: a new society and a new reality described with new words or old ones that have been reinterpreted.

For the above reasons, in this book, I use language that is as consistent as possible with the values and ideas conveyed. Inevitably, the language used may not be entirely inclusive and may have limitations, as it is a compromise between the need for appropriate expression and the goal of producing a clear, accessible, and comprehensible text.

Terms used from an antispeciesist perspective

The following is meant to be a practical example of reinterpreting the current language in an antispeciesist and non-discriminatory way for greater respect towards non-humans. Although they have been subject to changes over time, they have always been adopted since this text was first drafted.

Animals: this noun is used to facilitate the readability of the text. The term "Animals" is intended as a replacement for "non-human animals", "other animals", or "non-humans". In short, it represents all animal species other than the human species. This term is considered to be positive and the first letter is capitalized to emphasize the equal dignity of every other Animal.

Humans, human people: used in place of the masculine noun "man," which was avoided because it is laden with philosophical and cultural meanings that place the Human above other Animals and have a definite reference to a patriarchal, hierarchical, and macho view of human society.

Dog, Pig, Human, etc.: these nouns are used with the first letter capitalized to give equal dignity to the different animal species.

To the Animals who have suffered and lost their lives because of me

Inventing a new relationship with other Animals, based on an egalitarian concept, means not only opposing the "Human-Animal" ontological dichotomy strongly rooted in our culture but doing so using theoretical tools that are as effective as those that have contributed to the formation of such a separation.

Adriano Fragano (2012)

Preface to the new edition

This text arises from the need to provide some possible definitions that are useful in clarifying and outlining the antispeciesist identity, allowing for better and more precise ways of intervening in our relationships with other living species. The definitions and concepts in this publication are the result of extensive theoretical elaboration and synthesis work stemming from my experience as an antispeciesist activist and author. They are also enriched by direct and indirect encounters I have had in the past with other activists. This text is the fifteenth revision of the original document that I first published in 2007, which has undergone numerous modifications leading up to the current result, which I consider to be its most mature stage. The book can be found in digital format at *www.antispeciesistmanifesto.org*.

The list of human people who have helped me over the years and whom I should mention is long, so I will limit myself to embracing them all with gratitude. In particular, I would like to thank Romina Kachanoski for her presence, constant support and valuable advice, and Tina Ferrari for her accurate and professional translation of this text.

Adriano Fragano

Definition of antispeciesism

Antispeciesism is the philosophical, political and cultural line of thought that fights against speciesism, anthropocentrism and the ideology of dominion, which represent the foundations of modern human society. Just as anti-racism rejects discrimination based on the presumed existence of human races and anti-sexism rejects discrimination based on sex, antispeciesism rejects discrimination based on species and argues that biologically belonging to the human species does not morally or ethically justify the right to dispose of the life, liberty and body of a sentient being of another species.[1]
Antispeciesist Humans fight for the basic needs of Animals to be considered as essential as those of Humans, seeking to deconstruct and reconstruct human society according to sensiocentric, biocentric and ecocentric criteria, with the aim of not causing avoidable suffering and harm to individuals of other living species and the planet. The antispeciesist approach maintains (considering all due differences and peculiarities) that:

1) the ability to feel (e.g., to feel pain), interact with the outside world, and manifest will, is the prerogative of all Animals, characterizing them as sentient beings with their own interests to pursue that must be respected.

Under these criteria, antispeciesism can also be considered a sensiocentric and *painist* philosophy;[2]

2) the existence of such abilities in Animals entails an essential change in their moral *status*, causing them to become *nonhuman persons*, or giving them an equivalent *status*, if the concept of person is not fully usable or appropriate. Based on this, antispeciesism can also be considered an individualist (because it focuses on the individual animal, its intrinsic value and not the species)[3] and anti-anthropocentric philosophy;

3) this should result in a profound transformation of relations between human and nonhuman persons, prefiguring a radical rethinking and consequent change of human society for the achievement of *Animal liberation*. A sense of interspecific justice, respect for otherness, nonviolence, self-control, empathy and compassion are crucial to this transformation.

Considerations

Antispeciesism is the philosophical, political and cultural line of thought that fights against speciesism, anthropocentrism and the ideology of dominion, which represent the foundations of modern human society.

Therefore, those who embrace the antispeciesist vision aim to promote its dissemination. The antispeciesist activist aims to adopt attitudes and behaviors that can influence society (the political vision of antispeciesism) and is therefore active through cultural, social, direct and personal initiatives for the creation of a new, more just, solidarity-based, horizontal and compassionate human society that could also be called *aspeciesist* (free of speciesism) or, better yet, a *free human society*. The antispeciesist activist therefore claims a political role, as it is precisely political action that is key for sociocultural change.

Antispeciesism opposes speciesism understood as the single dominant mindset in today's human society, conceived as vertical, repressive and hierarchical, based on the "right of the fittest," geared toward the protection of privilege and wealth, at the expense of freedom, equality and solidarity with Animals.

Hence, antispeciesism does not simply intend to reform human society, but aims to radically change it by eliminating its anthropocentric, discriminatory, liberticidal, violent and authoritarian tendencies. In short, by revolutionizing it through the demolition of its defining ideology of dominion. Antispeciesism can therefore be understood as oppositional thought with a deconstructive mission, intended to dissolve with the disappearance of speciesism and the emergence of a new aspeciesist human society.

Just as anti-racism rejects discrimination based on the presumed existence of human races and anti-sexism rejects discrimination based on sex, antispeciesism rejects discrimination based on species.

The antispeciesist not only strives to eliminate discrimination based on fictitious species barriers created by the human species to distinguish itself from and place itself above Nature and other living beings, but also upholds principles that recognize the full rights of human individuals, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical and mental condition, class, ethnicity, nationality, and so on.
This is because antispeciesism can be considered historically as a natural progression of struggles for civil rights and human liberation (but not a derivation from them, as they are to be considered anthropocentric) and in absolute antithesis with xenophobic, discriminatory views

and more generally with fascism, authoritarianism and totalitarianism of any political orientation or nature, because they are vehicles of the ideology of dominion, oppression and repression.
The antispeciesist point of view has some peculiar characteristics that distinguish it from any other struggle for social justice and human liberation[4]: in fact, it does not provide for concessions (enlargement of the sphere of rights, of the *polis*), but calls for a fundamental and indispensable self-control of human activities, based on the principles of responsibility, equity, justice, nonviolence and solidarity towards other Animals.

Antispeciesism proposes a re-imagining of human interspecific relations by considering our moral duties toward other sentient and living species in general, no longer considered inferior, but simply *other*: nonhuman persons, in the case of sentient living beings and populations of nonhuman persons. Openness to and recognition of otherness imply that antispeciesist action has the primary goal of respecting and protecting the interests of Animals (because they are subjects deprived of the most basic rights, such as natural rights and privileged *status*) and as a result, the recognition of the individual rights of Humans, for historical reasons already mentioned and because they belong to the animal world. The antispeciesist activist has a moral obligation to take a stand daily against all kinds of injustice and abuse towards Animals.

Concern for Humans, the environment and the Earth should be considered an intrinsic part of the struggle for Animal liberation.

For the reasons set out above, antispeciesism cannot be regarded as *abolitionist* (it does not call on institutions to amend laws, rules and regulations), but rather as *liberationist*. In other words, one aspires for the liberation of animal individuals in the broadest sense, considering the individual human and civil society as benchmarks for change. For the antispeciesist activist, personal conduct is essential, consistently applying antispeciesist principles to one's daily life, especially through the practices of ethical veganism[5], and thus critical consumption (understood as a necessary method for the ultimate move away from consumerism), boycotting, recycling and reusing goods and services, as well as all other practices helpful in achieving the least possible impact on other Animals, Humans and the environment. The practices of ethical veganism are deemed indispensable in the pursuit of antispeciesism, and thus, they are considered a necessary minimum requirement.

Any vision that is reformist, hierarchical, reactionary, repressive, or aimed at preserving the *status quo* of human society based on the privileges of anthropocentrism and speciesism must be considered alien and antithetical to the antispeciesist vision.

Every doctrine, philosophy, political stance, religion, and ideology based on speciesism and anthropocentrism is rejected and opposed by the antispeciesist vision.

Other useful definitions

Veganism

The term *vegan*, which comes from the contraction of the word veg(etari)an, was coined in England by Donald Watson together with a small group of human beings, with whom he founded *The Vegan Society* in London in 1944.

The term signifies a moral philosophy that entails the exclusion, from the lives of those who follow it, of all forms of exploitation, killing and cruelty to Animals. In other words, a vegan person not only avoids eating meat or fish, but also dairy products, eggs and honey. Vegans refrain from wearing leather, wool, silk or fur garments; avoid consuming products that are derived from direct or indirect Animal exploitation; neither buy nor sell Animals and do not participate in any activities that contribute to the exploitation or harm of Animals. Vegans reject and boycott all humane practices involving the exploitation, torture, imprisonment, domination and/or killing of Animals, such as breeding, zoos, circuses, animal experimentation, hunting, fishing, festivals and competitions with Animals, etc.

It should be noted that veganism is neither an ultimate goal nor a way of life to be followed, but rather a moral

philosophy that affects and permeates every daily activity of those who adopt it, leading to radical changes in individual behavior and every social relationship.[6]

Anthropocentrism

Anthropocentrism (from the Greek ἄνθρωπος, *anthropos*, "human being" and κέντρον, *kentron*, "center") is the tendency – which can be derived from a theory, a philosophy, a religion or an opinion – to regard Humans and all that is proper to them as central to the universe. This centrality can be understood in different ways: from simple superiority over the rest of the animal world to ontological supremacy over all reality.

Speciesism

The term *speciesism* was first proposed by British psychologist Richard Ryder in 1970[7], referring to the prejudicial belief that Humans enjoy a higher moral *status* (and thus greater rights) than other Animals. Ryder intended to point out the similarities between speciesism and racism, showing that the arguments for condemning these two positions are similar.

Among the various justifications put forward in defense of speciesism as prejudice, the most common are based on the following foundations:

1) the biased and instrumental interpretation of the natural mechanisms of interspecies struggle (the *law of the jungle*, the food chain, etc.); our species, proclaiming itself as the strongest and most intelligent on the planet and at the top of the food chain, believes it has the right to dispose of other living beings as it pleases;

2) a notion of law understood as a prerogative attributable only to Humans, because they are believed to be the only living beings endowed with reason;

3) the presumed lack of awareness of all Animals of their own existence, which would make them inferior to us.
Quite arbitrarily, human superior moral *status* is also extended to human individuals who lack the attributes instrumentally used to justify such *status*, but who are protected as members of the human species (e.g., infants, individuals with mental disabilities, individuals in a vegetative state).

Speciesism is not only a prejudiced attitude (individual or collective), but also an ideology and practice of domination over Animals.[8] More generally, speciesism can be called an anthropocentric philosophy in the understanding of Animals.
In this regard, it is important to define the concept of dominance in an attempt to understand when human society becomes speciesist by practicing it over other living species. The control (total or partial) of another living

being's biological cycle to the point of loss of autonomy could be defined as "exploitation". When exploitation is exercised over another living sentient being as a denial of the possibility of having any free relationship and as a reduction (or erasure) of the other being's identity, then we are speaking of "domination." That said, human societies that practice the domestication of non-human life in all its forms and, consequently, the entire history of human civilizations based on Animal husbandry and agriculture, should be considered speciesist. It can generally be asserted that speciesism, as an ideological view, arose with the establishment of anthropocentric civilizations, cultures and religions[9] in which the Human stands outside of – above – Nature, as *master of nature*, in a position of ontological privilege.

Human history also shows us that although speciesism was not the sole cause of such social developments, it is certain that without the exploitation of Nature and Animals, it would not have been possible to create the social and economic wealth gap that is the basis of capitalist, sexist, racist and belligerent societies and, therefore, of all modern human "civilization".

Oppressions of species, gender, class and race are largely connected: human society itself is sustained and defined by relations of exclusion, which regularly foster exploitative practices that benefit an *elite*. It can therefore be understood how the struggle against Animal exploitation aims to eliminate the fundamental building block on which the entire so-called civilization of domination in

which we live has been built.
For the above reasons, it is safe to assume that the prevailing common morality and all institutions (local, national, international or supranational) are marked by a speciesist philosophy. Therefore, it is no coincidence that in the context of Animal liberation, an awareness has been maturing for some time that pushes us to broaden the ethical scope of the original historical debate on speciesism.
Speciesism is undoubtedly a very complex and multifaceted phenomenon that affects every human setting, and it is even prevalent – in one of its many variants – in Animal advocacy circles and consists of the attitude of allowing only certain Animals to enter the sphere of human moral consideration. So-called "pet" Animals are one clear example; their interests are more recognized than those of other Animals, only because they are considered important to their human guardians.
Lastly, it should be pointed out that if human society has developed – with rare exceptions – along certain guidelines characterized by ideologies such as speciesism, it can be inferred that speciesism itself probably has much deeper roots than those analyzed so far, not only social and historical but also anthropological; therefore, it is appropriate to consider the existence of *anthropological speciesism* or the *anthropological origin* of speciesism as well.

Brief historical background

The idea that the human species can freely dispose of any other living being in any way is deeply rooted in our society. For many years, however, there has been an antispeciesist movement striving to give equal weight to the primary interests of both Humans and other Animals in the pursuit of an ideal of justice and equal rights between species.
The concept of antispeciesism results from a long history: behind it are generations of human beings who have tried, through different traditions and approaches, to denounce the injustices committed by the human species against Animals.
To summarize as much as possible, it can be said that in Western history[10] the following methods of 'defending' Animals have ensued:

1) a feeling of love and respect of individuals for Animals (e.g. Porphyry, Leonardo da Vinci, Tolstoy, Schweitzer);

2) an Animal welfare/protectionist movement that, from the 19th century onwards, developed a moral interest in Animals as an "extension" of human rights (e.g. the *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*, which later became the RSPCA, or the circles linked to Henry Stephens

Salt, who worked on Animal rights, antivivisectionism and ethical vegetarianism);

3) a liberationist/abolitionist movement that since the 1970s has theorized (e.g. Richard Ryder, Peter Singer, Tom Regan), and put into practice (A.L.F. – *Animal Liberation Front*) a vision of the liberation of Animals from human domination, breaking away definitively from concepts related to Animal advocacy and protectionism.

The antispeciesist view does not consider the human species as inherently and completely "evil" (totally harmful, to be eliminated) and begins with two assumptions: that the entire human society is neither *inherently* nor *necessarily* hierarchical and oppressive.
The first assumption helps to understand when and how human society became speciesist, through a historical and anthropological analysis of the relationships between human society, Animals and Nature. The second assumption makes it possible to conceive the possibility of a future change in human society and to elaborate a practice capable of bringing about such a change.[11]
Historically, anarchist culture was the first to approach the concept of antispeciesism, understanding its critical stance that seeks a radical change in human societies in their entirety. However, this awareness is not the exclusive heritage of certain fringes of the anarchist movement, or any other social, political or cultural move-

ment, even if revolutionary, and antispeciesism cannot and should not be identified or traced back to them. It stands as a completely independent philosophical and political thought, detached from past and present logics, practices and politics, which firmly rejects the use of violence against any living being (including Humans), as a method of resistance, capable of inspiring a practice of radical transformation of existence. A mindset that, as it revolutionizes interspecies (Human-Animal) relationships, is bound to transform intraspecies (Human-Human) relationships as well.

Relationships between individuals

A new and free human society can only be achieved if we can create a new healthy and harmonious relationship (both individually and collectively) that is no longer pathological, as it is now, with other sentient beings and, more generally, with living things and ecosystems. New *tools* will therefore be needed to regulate the complex and continuous contacts between individuals of different species. With its theory, antispeciesism forms a *system of moral principles* that require *responsible conduct* to fully implement a *new moral vision* of our relationship with Animals.

That is why I propose the adoption of five principles useful for the creation of new behavioral criteria based on broad interspecies impartiality (as far as possible), derived from concepts of respect, solidarity, empathy, compassion and justice.

The five principles are a loose reworking of those originally devised by the U.S. philosopher Paul W. Taylor[12] for the development of his important theory on the ethics of respect for Nature and could become an effective new relational model in the immediate future as well. These principles would apply in the same ways as outlined below, not only in Human-Animal relationships, but also in Human-to-Human relationships.

1) *The principle of self-defense*
It is legitimate to retaliate even by resorting to violent acts only and exclusively to protect one's own safety in case of aggression and if there is no other solution. An act of violence against an Animal can therefore only be conceived as an extreme solution of self-defense in the absence of alternatives. A possible extension of this principle would be to consider a violent act, if there is an extreme need to intervene, in the event of injury to the *basic interests*[13] of another living being unable to defend itself;

2) *The principle of proportionality*
This principle establishes that there should always be proportionality between the interests at stake. In any interspecies relationship, the *basic interests* always prevail over the *nonbasic interests*[14] of the parties involved, regardless of their species;

3) *The principle of least harm (minimum wrong)*
If, after careful and serious evaluation, it is decided that it is necessary to undertake an action to satisfy *nonbasic interests* that are *inherently compatible*[15] with the *basic interests* of others (an action that could potentially cause harm to Animals by conflicting with their *basic interests*), it can only be implemented if it generally involves the least possible impact and harm. Through this principle, the empathic antispeciesist vision could be constantly applied in practice, and an assessment of the impact of our

actions could be made;

4) *The principle of distributive justice*
To be used if the first three principles cannot be applied for a valid reason, and in the case of equal importance of interests between individuals or between the species involved: both *basic interests*. Under this principle, the action that will be evaluated as most positive considering its effects for the good of the entire community of living things, and not just to satisfy the interests of one party, prevails. Hence, where the interests of the parties are of equal weight, the action that most satisfies the common good will be taken;

5) *The principle of restorative justice (restitutive justice)*
If it is absolutely unavoidable to cause harm to an individual (or group of individuals) relying on the third or fourth principle, that individual (or group of individuals) is entitled to compensation that is as directly proportional as possible to the harm suffered. If this is not possible, it will be considered a form of compensation for the damage done in favor of the community of beings.

Ten FAQs about antispeciesism

FAQ 1 – *Is it possible to identify and trace the origin and development of speciesism throughout the process of human evolution?*

Speciesism is not only a prejudice (personal or collective) against other living beings as non-humans, it is also an anthropocentric philosophy necessary to justify Human control and domination practices over other Animals (breeding, hunting, fishing, slaughter, vivisection, etc.).
At the root of speciesism is Human's anthropocentric view of Nature. Therefore, to understand the problem in its entirety, it is not enough to talk about prejudice, but also about the historical, sociological and anthropological component of speciesism.

Thanks to speciesism, our species has felt – and feels – entitled to dispose of other living beings at will, considered inferior or exploitable simply because they belong to a species different from ours (speciesism understood as discrimination).
Also through this notion, which originated from anthropocentrism, we have been able to devise and create, in the past as well as in contemporary times, societies based on the exploitation of Animals, living things, and the

planet. The origins of speciesism are thus also historical, sociological, and political: over time, human society has defined and institutionalized concepts of exclusion, control, subjugation, and domination over other Animals, through the introduction of, for example, speciesist practices such as domestication, agriculture, and breeding. Human speciesist society, therefore, influences and *educates* the individual and makes that individual speciesist.

Lastly, speciesism also has anthropological underpinnings: if almost all human societies have "evolved" in one direction marked by aggression, violence and exploitation of other Animals and living things (with rare exceptions), this is probably also attributable to human characteristics, tendencies and predispositions that have led to the construction of speciesist societies.

FAQ 2 – *If it is no longer legitimate to think that the human species is worth more than others, how should our relationships with other sentient species change?*

In a hypothetical aspeciesist and liberated human society, relationships between Humans and other Animals would have to change dramatically. From the perspective of respecting otherness, interspecies relationships between sentient beings should become equal, horizontal and spontaneous: no longer regulated through Human control and exploitation, but by respect and according to the criterion of least possible impact on others, who would

be considered in all respects as non-human persons.

The change in interspecific relations proposed by anti-speciesism would lead human society to reinterpret its entire relationship with the environment; the Earth would finally become what it has always been: the planet of every living being, and not just ours.
The human species has colonized and altered the land profoundly (anthropization) and with enormous damage. This could no longer happen in a future human society that takes into account the needs of other Animals as well. Any human intervention should be minimal and thoughtful while also considering the needs of other sentient beings (and more generally, living things) that live with us in the territories where we intend to act.
For the reasons stated, it can also be said that in a liberated society there could no longer be Animals who are "modified," exploited and generally used or managed by Humans. Animals created through selective crossbreeding or the result of genetic engineering techniques, divided into categories according to their use and function (*for* income, meat, work, companionship, etc.) and forced to lead a completely unnatural existence, should be allowed to live a dignified life until its natural conclusion without being further exploited. These Animals could be released into natural environments if they can readapt to wild life, or live in protected centers if they cannot independently provide for their own needs due to the artificial modification and artificial selection they

have been through.
In short, Animals such as Dogs, Cats, Pigs and Chickens (just to name a few examples) would return to the wild by ceasing to play any role assigned to them by human societies. Animal *breeds* would probably be destined to disappear over time, because they are entirely artificial.[16] The other so-called *wild* Animals would live according to their biological and ethological characteristics, free in Nature and without human management. This would not erase contacts and relationships between Humans and other Animals, but rather would finally place them on a horizontal and reciprocal level: they would take place freely in a natural context, no longer artificially modified and controlled.

FAQ 3 – *How is the relationship between Humans and the Earth's resources configured from an antispeciesist perspective?*

The Earth is the *common home* of all living things and as such should be respected, protected and not exploited and devastated as is now happening. One should not speak of the Earth's "resources," but of its "riches": to be studied to understand their characteristics, to be used minimally and with restraint, shared with other Animals and living things in general.

As mentioned in FAQ 2, the relationships between Humans, other Animals and the environment would un-

dergo profound changes following the new antispeciesist perspective.
What planet Earth "offers" should be considered a common treasure for all living things, to be treated with respect, humility and moderation, with the understanding that we do not own these resources. For this reason, the exploitation of natural riches (such as water, for example) would cease, changing to *responsible use*, always considering the fundamental interests of other living species, weighing every choice and activity, according to an idea of the common good of the community understood as a network of the Earth's living beings.
As a practical example, consider the environmental havoc (resulting in the decimation of Animals) of so-called "major" engineering works such as dams, detours of waterways, mountain tunnels, highways, etc. All this could no longer be put into practice, because of the devastating impact it would have on a huge number of living beings; the very human concepts of "progress" and "civilization" would become the subject of extensive reinterpretations, as they are conceived only based on the anthropocentric paradigm of growth, consumption, and exploitation of the planet and living beings. For these reasons, antispeciesism fits well with concepts such as Degrowth, which, with its proposals for virtuous practices, if interpreted from a non-anthropocentric perspective, could be very useful in building a future human society in harmony with other living beings. The same can be said for non-anthropocentric positions within

Deep Ecology.

FAQ 4 – *What are the main differences between Animal advocacy and antispeciesism?*

Animal advocacy (especially the historically defined *Animal liberationism*) is undoubtedly one of the pillars on which antispeciesist thought is based, but its scope is limited exclusively to Animals. Antispeciesism, by virtue of the fact that Humans also belong to the animal world and that speciesism is also a human socio-cultural phenomenon, considers the issues of discrimination, exploitation and domination by including, as far as is possible, our own species and by taking a political position of global critique of human speciesist society. Antispeciesism is also Animal advocacy, but the reverse is not true.

Animal advocacy and antispeciesism are two complex phenomena, and it is not possible to precisely circumscribe them in order to make a comparison; in general in general, two major differences can be found: the antispeciesist critique of contemporary human society, which is absent or very poorly defined in Animal advocacy, and the anti-anthropocentric approach typical of antispeciesism, which is either missing in Animal advocacy or is a marginal element of it. The Animal advocate fights for the recognition of the rights of Animals conceived as sentient beings (capable of sensory and emotional experiences such as joy, fear, pleasure, pain, and

anger) and as such, worthy of respect and moral consideration. This approach may involve (depending on the case) the advancement of legally, economically, socially and politically relevant proposals to change our relationship with other Animals, but it does not necessarily challenge the ideological foundations on which contemporary human society is based. While Animal advocacy aims – in most cases – to improve human society by fostering greater respect for Animals, it does not seek to radically change it as antispeciesism proposes to do.

One practical consequence may be the different attitudes that Animal advocacy and antispeciesism have toward institutions. Animal advocacy usually takes a dialogical form with institutions, recognizing them as the point of reference and making demands such as laws, measures in favor of Animals, or *abolitionist* demands; antispeciesism has an anti-hierarchical view, therefore it does not recognize the institution (the State, the Government, the Church, etc.) as the point of reference, as it is the backbone of the vertical, hierarchical, and speciesist human society that it intends to change. Antispeciesist demands are thus clearly *liberationist* and no demands are made on the organs of power; instead, the individual human person and civil society are considered as points of reference.[17]

In addition, Animal advocacy does not have criticism of anthropocentrism as one of its main motivations; rather, it aims to extend the moral sphere and certain rights accorded to members of human society, to other Animals

as well. This does not necessarily imply an abandonment of the anthropocentric paradigm, and consequently of our species' approach to other species and Nature, but only a moral evolution of common feeling towards Animals. Antispeciesism in this regard has a revolutionary position and tends toward a paradigm shift, breaking with human society's anthropocentric past and present.

FAQ 5 – *Can we speak of antispeciesism as a single line of thought, or is it possible to identify within it different visions, movements and perspectives?*

Antispeciesism cannot yet be considered a complete and crystallized ideology; on the contrary, it is in constant flux and, in a relatively short period of time, has undergone considerable changes from its original theoretical framework. Therefore, we cannot speak of a single antispeciesist mindset (and perhaps there never will be), because there are numerous different movements within it.

If we want to consider antispeciesism in its traditional theoretical framework, it could be circumscribed to a struggle against species discrimination. This is because the English psychologist Richard Ryder, who first provided a definition of the phenomenon of speciesism, understood it precisely as discrimination.
Considering also the fundamental radical Animal advocacy component that has connoted the antispeciesist ideal since its birth, one could also conceive of it as a

new vision of the interspecific Human-Animal relationship. In other words, a new paradigm replacing the current one in defining the relationships that Humans have with other Animals. In fact, the antispeciesist argument cannot be relegated exclusively to such areas, since the critique of human interspecies relationships inevitably causes a strong exercise in social critique as well, involving the relationships between individual humans and the social architecture that creates the hierarchies of power within our society.

Therefore, antispeciesism exercises a marked political critique of the human society of domination, which is the main cause of the tragically wrong relationship we have with other Animals. For these reasons, it is ideally contiguous with liberationist struggles in the human sphere, although the latter are anthropocentric if not in many cases speciesist, therefore distinct from the antispeciesist struggle and not superimposable to it.

The foregoing is necessary to make it clear that antispeciesist thought is in constant motion and also draws lifeblood from other liberationist struggles, reworking their concepts and proposing new solutions and considerably broader visions. This current situation of "fluid" thought does not yet allow the construction of a real compact and univocal antispeciesist movement (and perhaps it would not even be ideally desirable); on the contrary, it favors the emergence of internal movements, but it is also the cause of continuous and dangerous fragmentations, if not in some cases, of real ideological devi-

ations.

FAQ 6 – *Does antispeciesist thought justify the use of violent fighting practices?*

No. Antispeciesism cannot accept the principle that in order to achieve Animal liberation, the same methodologies must be adopted as those that are used by the speciesist, hierarchical, domineering and violent human society to maintain the current state of affairs. The end never justifies the means; the use of violent practices against the living, except as an extreme act of self-defense, is not permissible.

The antispeciesist struggle is nonviolent, understood as a nonbelligerent push for radical change in current human society from a *liberationist* perspective, although the use of violent acts in extreme cases and in self-defense cannot be ruled out entirely. The nonviolent matrix stems from the very antispeciesist concept of opposition to any practice of exploitation and domination over Animals, and in a broader sense, over living beings. The desire to oppose *biopower* exercised over Animals also places antispeciesism on libertarian, anti-hierarchical nonviolent positions.
To oppose the violence of antispeciesist society, to oppose the "might makes right" paradigm that is instilled in us from birth, with the same methodologies and practices used by the social structure one intends to change,

would be to betray the antispeciesist ideal.
No end can justify the means, even less so if it corresponds to practices of control and domination, because it would not contribute to creating a future without speciesism, and would only perpetuate the current social model.
The practice, therefore, is already the materialization of the goal that is to be pursued consistently; this means avoiding the use of methodologies that would run counter to the intended goal. Coercion, control, domination, violence (understood as physical or psychological acts directed against living things to bend them to our will) and in general impositions that trigger hierarchical logic cannot belong to antispeciesism.
It can also be argued that the antispeciesist fight is not aimed at a *seizure of power* but at its elimination, and that all direct action is desirable and useful if it does not lead to acts of violence against living things, including Humans.[18]

FAQ 7 – *How does the antispeciesist mindset deal with unlimited growth, and the myth of production and consumption as dominant practices in today's industrialized human societies?*

The doctrine of unlimited growth, competition, and the capitalist conception of human society are antithetical to the antispeciesist idea, which advocates a vision centered on horizontality, self-control, and degrowth of human

interference as the method of achieving a balance between Humans, other living species, and the planet. Antispeciesism can thus be considered a philosophy that opposes the prevailing socioeconomic system.

The myth of the GDP, the illusion of infinite growth, hyper-liberalism and globalized production as the engine of mass, continuous and inordinate serial consumption are among the main features of today's consumer society. The objective unsustainability, regardless of questions of principle, of this social and economic model is self-evident: on a planet with limited natural resources, with their rate of renewal far below the rate at which human activities consume energy and materials, to think that we can grow in the production of goods and services, seamlessly, to feed consumption for its own sake, is simply foolish.
These simple findings on their own would be enough to decide to oppose capitalist society. But it is also necessary to consider that capitalism takes no account whatsoever of the needs of the individual, of their fundamental rights as a sentient and living being (setting profit as its only goal), and that for a philosophy, such as the antispeciesist philosophy, which places the interest and intrinsic value of the animal individual at its center and aims for complete liberation, this is clearly unacceptable.
Consequently, antispeciesism is placed on anti-capitalist, anti-consumerist and anti-globalist positions, close to virtue-driven theories and practices marked by decreased

impact on other living beings and the environment, such as degrowth, self-production, the concept of "common good", sharing (first of all of knowledge), local microeconomics, and all the so-called *good practices* necessary for the construction of a new economic and productive model that places moderation, individual and collective responsibility at the top of its scale of values.

FAQ 8 – *Can groups ideologically linked to conservative, reactionary, sexist, racist, fascist, or neo-nazi ideas declare themselves antispeciesists?*

No. Antispeciesist theory is based on respect for otherness and individuality, and does not consider *diversity* a negative value to be discriminated against, but a positive value to be respected. In this sense, any thought that promotes discrimination and generates a hierarchy of individuals is incompatible with antispeciesism.

The antispeciesist conception of the animal individual presupposes respect for the individual's species-specific needs, characteristics, and the legitimate right to fulfill their own purposes. Antispeciesism's egalitarian (concerning fundamental rights) and individualist features are therefore fundamental and determine its politics and daily practices. From these assumptions, it is clear that diversity and, more generally, otherness (biological, cultural, etc.), are not perceived as a problem or with a negative connotation; for antispeciesism, they are posi-

tive elements of great importance to be understood and respected. Thus, the antispeciesist orientation is one of emancipation of the individual and is aimed at major socio-cultural changes in discontinuity with traditions, customs and cultural roots that are speciesist and discriminatory.
It seems clear that the antispeciesist idea can have no connection with cultures and ideologies that are based on or convey conservative, reactionary ideas, defense of cultural traditions born out of privilege and discrimination of diversity, or based on the repression of liberationist demands and the self-determination of the individual and peoples. Fascist, nazi, segregationist, sexist, racist or similar ideologies and methodologies not only have nothing in common with antispeciesist theory but are opposed and fought by it.
The above obviously applies to cultures and ideologies of any political orientation or *color* (thus, including leftist) that involve authoritarian, liberticidal and hierarchical methods.

FAQ 9 – *What is the current relationship between the anti-capitalist movement and antispeciesism?*

Theoretically, the relationship between anti-capitalism and antispeciesism should be close, since both aim for the elimination of inequality and injustice albeit to different degrees and visions.

Considering that Animals nowadays are enormously exploited mainly for economic reasons and that their bodies constitute one of the elements on which capitalism was founded, it can be argued that antispeciesism is also anti-capitalism, but the reverse is not true: the points of contact are numerous, but reciprocity is lacking.

The state of current relations between anti-capitalist movements and antispeciesism is hardly comforting.
There are numerous initiatives in the antispeciesist sphere that put forth anti-capitalist visions: there is great interest in these issues because of the daily commodification of the bodies of Animals for profit, but it is seldom reciprocated by anti-capitalist movements.
The main problem arises from the fact that struggles for human liberation, and more generally for human rights and social justice (thus, also anti-capitalist struggles), inevitably start from anthropocentric premises and do not conceive of or admit (with rare exceptions) any broadening of the interest and the front of intervention to include the *issue of animals*; on the other hand, antispeciesism, which fights for the liberation of Animals from the anthropocentric and speciesist paradigm, takes into consideration (albeit from different perspectives) the liberationist struggles within human society, not only for consistency and completeness but also for cultural affinity.
In fact, there are historically *common roots* between liberationist struggles in the human sphere and antispecies-

ism, which has made them its own and interpreted them from an anti-anthropocentric perspective. It is precisely this interpretation that is still an almost always insurmountable problem for other struggles. In this specific case, it can be said that antispeciesism is anti-capitalist, but the reverse is not true, and more generally that this lack of reciprocity sadly seems to be a constant in the relationship between antispeciesism and struggles for social justice and human liberation. Probably one of the reasons for this is that antispeciesism is not *part* of any pre-existing struggles or ideologies, but an *evolution* of them, endowed with its own theoretical framework and its own completely independent and new positioning.

FAQ 10 – *Is it possible to imagine a concrete example of a society liberated from speciesism?*

Imagining a human society liberated from antispeciesism is a very difficult mental exercise because currently, all human persons (even antispeciesist ones) live in a speciesist social system, therefore they have been and are inevitably subjected to the conditioning of the speciesist paradigm. Due to a *lack of imagination* resulting from this condition, it is only possible to partially conceive of the repercussions that the implementation of the antispeciesist idea will have on human society in the future.

The radical changes generated by the paradigm shift of the future antispeciesist society cannot be fully imagined

and evaluated at this moment in history: in addition to a vivid imagination, we would need information and tools that we do not have, because today we live in a society that is still absolutely speciesist, and as a result, our own imagination is conditioned (or rather colonized) by it.

That being said, it is of course possible to foresee extensive changes in social relations, economics, culture, lifestyles, morals, social structures and infrastructure, and especially in our actions on the land and towards other living things.

What seems more than certain right now is that a future antispeciesist humanity cannot exist if we continue to grow demographically, increasing our already very heavy impact on the planet. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that an antispeciesist society will consist of a very small number of Humans, who could settle in limited areas that are favorable to us in terms of climate, environmental conditions (presence of fresh water, vegetation, etc.) and with soils suitable for the cultivation and harvesting of a wide variety of vegetables. From a zoogeographical point of view, this would mean transforming the human species from its current cosmopolitan status to an endemic one.

It is easy to imagine that in this transformation process, agriculture would undergo profound changes so that it would probably become a subsistence activity, integrated as much as possible into the environment, and respectful of other living beings.[19]

Any form of Animal husbandry, on the other hand,

would simply be doomed to disappear.
The new concept of interspecies respect would lead human society to reconsider the idea of private property: the Earth is the c*ommon home* of all living beings, so it should no longer be partitioned, controlled, fenced off, or irrevocably transformed to suit Human needs, but coinhabited and lived in by drawing from it only what is necessary. The most appropriate kind of future human-populated settlement might be a village: in harmony with the environment as much as possible, small in size, and with a small number of human beings in order to foster relationships, mutuality, and shared administration of the community. Thus, the concepts of politics and participation in public life would also change, and community management could materialize through the direct intervention of individual human beings, perhaps through practices of direct and participatory democracy, organizing assemblies with the use of the *consensus method*; in general, with social organizations as simplified and horizontal as possible.
Travel could take place along much less devastating routes than at present, with means of locomotion quite different from those of today, favoring the use only of technologies with the least environmental impact and not generating forms of exploitation (so-called *appropriate technologies*), greatly limiting the speed of transportation, and considerably decreasing the distances between settlements populated by Humans.
An antispeciesist future is not synonymous with "going

back to our origins" or primitivism, but with the responsible and non-speciesist use of human knowledge, science and technology employed to understand and coexist and not to exploit, profit and dominate. Hence, for the construction of a human society oriented toward the greatest possible integration and peaceful coexistence among living beings.

The author

Adriano Fragano

With a degree in Natural Sciences with a focus on botany from the University of Padua, Fragano is an essayist, activist and proponent of veganism, antispeciesism and Animal liberation.
In 2005 he co-founded the antispeciesist counter-information project *Campagne per gli animali* [Campaigns for animals] and in 2007 he founded *Veganzetta – notizie dal mondo vegan e antispecista* [news from the vegan and antispeciesist world], one of the first antispeciesist magazines published in Italy.
He is the creator of the project *Manifesto Antispecista* [Antispeciesist Manifesto] and the author of numerous articles and books including *Disobbedienza vegana. Ovvero il veganismo come potrebbe essere* [Vegan disobedience, or veganism as it could be].

www.manifestoantispecista.org
www.veganzetta.org

Notes

1/ A truly comprehensive concept of antispeciesism should obviously consider all living species. Since what is presented in this book is, on the other hand, limited to the consideration of animal species alone, it should be specified that this is due to the desire to propose a theory that can be concretely applied in everyday life, together with an awareness of the current human inability to put antispeciesism into practice in its entirety. Consider the ethical and, most importantly, practical issues that might arise when applying antispeciesism to plants as well as Animals. For this reason, the definitions and considerations discussed here are intentionally limited in their theoretical development for the time being, solely due to our present condition.

2/ "Painism": a term Richard Ryder coined in 1990, arguing that any living being capable of feeling pain has moral relevance.
Painism therefore aims to reduce the suffering imposed on sentient beings and can be seen as a third approach to Peter Singer's utilitarian position and Tom Regan's deontological concept of Animal rights. For further information and insight, see Richard D. Ryder, *Painism: A Modern Morality*, Open Gate Press, London, 2003.

3/ The fundamental focus on the individual in antispeciesism is also found in the importance it places on the attitude of self-criticism, consistency and responsibility of the antispeciesist human being, representing the foundation for a non-speciesist evolution of

the individual, which is indispensable and a precursor to that of human society.

4/ For an in-depth exploration of the relationship between antispeciesism and human liberation struggles (and related issues) see the articles published in Veganzetta
https://www.veganzetta.org/intersectionality

5/ I use the term "ethical veganism" only to distinguish veganism, as a moral philosophy, from practices adopted for mere health, culinary, dietary, or similar reasons, improperly referred to as "vegan" but which actually have little or nothing to do with interspecies justice, empathy and compassion.

6/ For a detailed look at the topic of "veganism," see Adriano Fragano, *Disobbedienza vegana. Ovvero il veganismo come potrebbe essere* [Vegan disobedience, or veganism as it could be], NFC Edizioni, Rimini, 2018. More information at
https://www.veganzetta.org/dFe9D

7/ I recommend reading the article *La nascita del termine "specismo"* [The birth of the term "speciesism"], «Veganzetta», October 29, 2021. https://www.veganzetta.org/2BFrA

8/ The sociologist David Nibert states that «speciesist ideologies were created and promulgated to legitimate killing and exploitation of other animals». See David Nibert, *Animal Rights/ Human Rights: Entanglements of oppression and liberation*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 2002, p. 243.

9/ While human gathering and hunting societies were characterized by interspecies cruelty, they probably cannot be regarded as unequivocally speciesist societies due to their animistic view of the living world. However, it is likely that they were potentially so without being able to become so, due to the yet limited ability to control living things. In that case, they could legitimately be regarded as the ancestors of later human speciesist societies.

10/ It should be noted that Eastern thought has conceived of some rare philosophies and religions (think of Jainism for example) that do not acknowledge a fundamental difference between Humans and Animals.

11/ The aim of antispeciesist action is not the isolation from the rest of Nature or the extinction of our species, but the restoration and development of relationships between living species based on autonomy, respect and freedom.

12/ Paul W. Taylor, *Respect for Nature. A Theory of Environmental Ethics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1986.

13/ According to Taylor, "basic interests" are defined as those interests whose fulfillment is to be considered indispensable for the continued existence of a living organism, thus to be regarded as primary and indispensable values.

14/ Taylor defines "nonbasic interests" as those interests that are necessary for the satisfaction of certain value systems, or for species-specific needs, which are not to be considered vital, and do

not affect the existence of the individual or the species.

15/ Taylor makes a further distinction by talking about interests that are "inherently incompatible" with an attitude of respect for Nature (e.g., killing Animals for "sport") and those that are "inherently compatible" with that attitude, even though they are still responsible for harm to other Animals (e.g., road construction).

16/ The term "breed" belongs to the field of Animal husbandry and not to the field of zoology, for which it has no meaning and where other taxonomic definitions are used to indicate varieties present within a biological species. Animal breeds are exclusively the result of selection and domestication imposed on other Animals by our species, resulting in the appearance of animal individuals with particular characteristics that are functional to our needs.

17/ The problem of Animal exploitation is so enormous and so deep-rooted in human society that it is impossible to think of using solely the liberationist approach (or solely any other approach) to combat it effectively: strategically speaking, any method of combating it, if truly aimed at the disappearance of speciesism, can be useful. What has been said, however, does not contradict the fact that the antispeciesist perspective is consistently liberationist.

18/ As moreover always advocated in the historic A.L.F. guidelines. For information see the article *Cos'è l'Animal Liberation Front?* [What is the Animal Liberation Front?], «Manifesto Antispecista», November 18, 2013.
https://www.manifestoantispecista.org/web/9b6Vg

19/ Some interesting techniques could be *vegan organic horticulture*, Robert Hart's *forest gardening*, Masanobu Fukuoka's *natural farming*, and Emilia Hazelip's *synergistic farming*.

Antispeciesism is a revolutionary idea that, if correctly applied, would lead to a radical deconstruction and transformation of human society. This idea is new and constantly evolving, and to avoid remaining purely theoretical, it needs to be applied logically and consistently in practice.

For this reason, a specific text may be useful to clarify the ideas surrounding it. "*Antispeciesist Manifesto. Theory, strategy, ethics and utopia for a new free society*" is a straightforward, concise and carefully thought-out project aimed at providing those interested in the subject with a set of theoretical tools to be shared as widely as possible. The relationship between Humans and other Animals is an increasingly important and debated topic, and it is be-coming clearer every day that this is one of the most complex and fundamental issues we face.

The book offers readers the opportunity to define and clarify the basic concepts of antispeciesism and provides a series of useful stimuli for future discussions on an idea that is still evolving. It also includes ten simple FAQs that will help those unfamiliar with antispeciesist issues to easily approach the topic.

One resists the invasion of armies,
one does not resist the invasion of ideas.
Victor Hugo